

## **Wyoming Office of the Attorney General Division of Victim Services**

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### **WYOMING PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN ON GUNS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

CHEYENNE, WY- Wyoming Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) - America's Network Against Gun Violence will launch their public awareness campaign on Guns and Domestic Violence on Friday, October 14th at 10:00 am at the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Wyoming, 2120 Capitol Avenue, 5th Floor.

Guns and domestic violence are a lethal combination - injuring and killing women every day in the United States. A gun is the weapon most commonly used in domestic homicides. In fact, more than three times as many women are murdered by guns used by their husbands or intimate acquaintances than are killed by strangers' guns, knives or other weapons combined. Contrary to many public perceptions, many women who are murdered are killed not by strangers but by men they know.

That is why during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October) PSN Wyoming is launching a public awareness campaign using a poster of a late model truck with a gun rack with the tagline "it's like this...beat a woman lose your guns."

The campaigns goal is to bring public awareness to the federal law, if someone is convicted of domestic violence, they can't possess a gun. That means they can't buy a gun, borrow a gun or use a gun, or they can go to federal prison.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun violence by linking together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders. PSN provides a multifaceted approach to deterring and punishing gun crime. PSN takes a hard line against gun criminals through every available means in an effort to make streets and communities safer.

Under this initiative, the number of federal firearms prosecutions has increased significantly-up 76 percent in the past 4 fiscal years (FY 2000 to FY 2004). In FY 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed 11,067 federal firearms cases and prosecuted 12,962 offenders with federal firearms offenses. The PSN effort here in Wyoming is truly collaborative with Matt Mead, U.S. Attorney for the District of Wyoming,

bringing together key leaders for the purpose of developing and implementing a plan that will address gun issues and concerns specific to Wyoming.

### **Wyoming Project Safe Neighborhoods Partners**

- The U. S. Attorney's Office
- Wyoming Governor's Office
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF)
- Substance Abuse Division of the Wyoming Department of Health
- Wyoming County Prosecutor's Association
- Wyoming Office of the Attorney General, Division of Victim Services
- Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police
- Wyoming Highway Patrol
- Wyoming Department of Corrections
- Wyoming Association of Municipalities

### **The Facts on Guns and Domestic Violence**

- Nearly one-third of all women murdered in the United States in recent years were murdered by a current or former intimate partner. Of females killed with a firearm, almost two-thirds were killed by their intimate partners.
- Access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide more than five times more than in instances where there are no weapons, according to a recent study. In addition, abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners.
- In 2002, 54 percent of female homicide victims were shot and killed with a gun. Handguns are more likely than rifles or shotguns to be used in homicides in which men kill women. In 2002, handguns were used in 73 percent of cases where men used firearms to kill women.
- In 1998, for every one woman who used a handgun to kill an intimate acquaintance in self-defense, 83 women were murdered by an intimate acquaintance using a handgun.
- A study of women physically abused by current or former intimate partners found a five-fold increased risk of the partner murdering the woman when the partner owned a gun.
- Domestic violence misdemeanor convictions and restraining orders were the second most common reason for denials of handgun purchase applications between 1994 and 1998.

These startling statistics clearly show the continued need for increased prevention and public awareness campaigns and to adopt a "Zero Tolerance" attitude and encouraging others to do the same. Possession of guns by convicted criminals and crimes committed with the use of guns are a very real and serious threat to our safety - a threat that we should not take lightly.

Please contact Ernie Johnson, the project coordinator for Wyoming at 307-351-8614 to find out how to work within your community to help Wyoming neighborhoods become safer.